

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Second Session
Geneva, April 30 to May 4, 2012

REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF A NEW WIPO STANDARD ON THE PRESENTATION OF NUCLEOTIDE AND AMINO ACID SEQUENCE LISTINGS USING EXTENSIBLE MARKUP LANGUAGE (XML)

prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its first session, agreed to create Task No. 44, which reads as follows:

“Prepare a recommendation on the presentation of nucleotide and amino acid sequence listings based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML) for adoption as a WIPO standard. The proposal of the new WIPO standard should be presented along with a report on the impact of the said standard on the current WIPO Standard ST.25, including the proposed necessary changes to Standard ST.25.”

(See paragraphs 26 to 29 of document CWS/1/10 Prov.)

2. In accordance with the above-mentioned decision by the CWS, the International Bureau issued Circular CWS 10, dated December 10, 2010, which invited those Offices wishing to participate actively in the discussions to nominate a representative to work as part of the SEQL Task Force. Following the set up of the electronic forum for the discussions of the Task Force, the European Patent Office, as Leader of the Task Force, presented an initial proposal for the consideration of the Task Force members in February 2011.

3. The SEQL Task Force Leader has prepared a progress report on the work carried out by the Task Force, along with a roadmap, that is reproduced as the Annex to this document for consideration by the CWS.

4. *The CWS is invited to note the report by the SEQL Task Force Leader reproduced in the Annex to this document.*

[Annex follows]

TASK FORCE ON SEQUENCE LISTINGS STANDARD

Status report by the European Patent Office

1. BACKGROUND

The Task Force on Sequence Listings was created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its first session (October 25-29, 2010), to deal with Task No. 44:

“Prepare a recommendation on the presentation of nucleotide and amino acid sequence listings based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML) for adoption as a WIPO standard. The proposal of the new WIPO standard should be presented along with a report on the impact of the said standard on the current WIPO Standard ST.25, including the proposed necessary changes to Standard ST.25.”

The Task Force was also requested:

“To liaise with the appropriate PCT body with regard to the possible impact of such standard on Annex C to the Administrative Instructions under the PCT.”

The EPO was assigned the role of Task Force Leader and has since then held five rounds of discussions on WIPO's wiki. The principle of differentiating the technical aspects of ST.25 from Annex C (PCT Administrative Instructions) was agreed upon at last PCT MIA 2011 and at the PCT Working Group 2011.

2. PROGRESS REPORT

The Task Force started operating in February 2011 on the basis of drafts prepared by the EPO. Many Offices participated in the process and posted useful comments on WIPO's related wiki. After nearly one year of intensive discussions, the Task Force achieved substantial progress and the EPO is currently preparing the draft of the main body and its various annexes that will be submitted for final comments by all members.

To summarise, the differences with current ST.25 are the following:

- All (PCT) procedural issues are transferred to the PCT Administrative Instructions: the new standard would concentrate on technical aspects only to enable an optimal presentation of the sequence listings (the biotech-related part) and the appropriate format of the submission (namely XML).
- The biotech-related part has been considerably improved to reflect modern industry standards, for example:
 - inclusion of modified nucleic acids and amino acids not previously provided for (e.g. D-amino acids, PNA, morpholinos etc.) which have gained importance in industry and need to be electronically searchable
 - clear instructions for gapped sequences and sequence variants
 - clarification with regard to features and annotations
 - consistency with latest public biological sequence repositories consortia requirements (INSDC and UniProt)

- The XML definition will be self-contained and ST.26 would be dependent on neither ST.36 nor on ST.96 (XML4IP).

3. TRANSITION FROM ST.25 TO ST.26

At the Nineteenth Session of the Meeting of International Authorities, it was agreed that:

(a) it would be preferable if the CWS Task Force, before concluding its work on the development of the new XML standard, would also look into the issue of whether it will be possible for any tool to be developed which would allow for the easy and complete conversion of sequence listings filed in one format (ST.25 Text or ST.26 XML) into the other;

(b) based on the conclusions reached by the Task Force on the issue of the feasibility of developing a conversion tool, the appropriate PCT bodies should commence a discussion on the most appropriate mechanism for transition from ST.25 to the new XML standard.

4. ROADMAP

The Final Draft of the standard is expected end March and is the result of the WIPO Task Force work. The final draft is intended to be used as a basis by the offices requiring public consultations. Pending public consultations, the content of the documents are considered as completed.

End March	Final Draft agreed by the Task Force Members
April	Results on conversions between ST.25 and ST.26 for preparing the discussions on the transition from ST.25 to ST.26
April CWS	Status report from the WIPO Task Force
June	Comments on Final Draft submitted by the Task Force members
July	Final documents to WIPO in preparation of a CWS (preferably Autumn 2012)

[End of Annex and of document]